

Preserved brain, slides withheld from archives

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right answer, wrong question

Autopsy matter proves 2 shot John Kennedy, expert says

From The New York Times
and The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The preserved brain of President John Kennedy, plus microscopic slides of tissues removed from his bullet wounds, have been withheld, apparently by the Kennedy family, from the assassination evidence in the National Archives, a medical expert said Saturday.

The expert, Cyril Wecht, was the first critic of the Warren Commission's report on the assassination to be allowed to see the items from the autopsy on the president.

He said that a two-day examination at the National Archives in Washington convinced him that it was physically impossible for only one gunman to have slain President Kennedy.

Dr. Wecht's findings were in direct contradiction not only with the Warren report conclusion that a single assassin was responsible for President Kennedy's death, but also with a report by Dr.

George Lattimer, the first private physician to examine the X-rays.

Dr. Wecht said: "The fact is that the physical evidence shows that not any one person could have been a shooter.

There had to have been at least two people shooting."

Interviews with government officials and President Kennedy's former personal secretary, Evelyn Lincoln, disclosed that the slides and probably the brain, which was removed from the body in the autopsy in 1963 and was preserved in a container of formalin, were delivered in a locked chest to a representative of Senator Robert Kennedy in 1965.

When the autopsy materials were placed in the national archives in 1966 by Burke Marshall, a representative of the Kennedy family, the slides, the brain and possibly some other items were not included.

Mr. Marshall, who now is a law professor at Yale University, said that he never had possession of the chest of items and that he did not know what happened to the brain or any other objects not now in the archives.

He said that Nicholas Katzenbach, Attorney-General, had ruled that certain X-rays,



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color transparencies and photographs taken at the autopsy, were evidence relevant to the assassination, and that Mr. Marshall obtained these from the Kennedy family and lodged them with the archives in 1966.

Mr. Marshall said that other items had apparently not been requested by the Justice Department because "they have no bearing on who killed the President." He deplored Dr. Wecht's "chasing after parts of the President's body because he hasn't found any evidence that anything else was wrong."

Dr. Wecht, who is a pathologist and a lawyer, said he felt certain that the brain was still "around somewhere" and that he intended to ask Mr. Marshall to permit a panel of experts to inspect it. "Who would have taken the responsibility to destroy the brain?" he asked.

The records of the Warren Commission show only that the brain was "removed and preserved for further study" in the autopsy, and that the usual sections were not removed for analysis "in the interest of preserving the specimen."

It is standard procedure in such cases to remove the brain and to "fix" it in formalin to prepare it for tests.

Usually, the tests are not concluded until after the burial, and the brain is then destroyed.

After the Kennedy autopsy, the Secret Service and other agencies delivered the various medical items to President Kennedy's personal physician, vice admiral George Burkley.

Marion Johnson, director of the National Archives' legislative, judicial and fiscal branch, said that in 1965 Adm. Burkley delivered the items to Mrs. Lincoln, who was working with President Kennedy's effects at the archives.

Adm. Burkley signed a two-page memorandum of transfer, dated April 26, 1965, but he did not disclose to whom the transfer had been made. Mr. Johnson characterized it as "in essence an inventory" of the items. He said that Mrs. Lincoln had turned all the material over to Senator Robert Kennedy but that when the material was returned by Mr. Marshall in 1966, some of the items on Adm. Burkley's inventory were not included.

only the point
to no proof of
Wecht's assertion

[amination of the ma-]

medical expert - Wecht - critic of J.A.R.

- Lattimer - private physician (a) was not (b) attended by Mr. Wecht